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ANTHRACITE COAL LOADING CONDITIONS AT CAM PHA, NORTH VIETNAM

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Unsigned Article

1. Entering Port

On 15 April, 2 pilots, one customs official, and 2 soldiers came to the ship in a port authority boat at the point which overlooks 16.10 zero by N 22° E 0.8 of 1 [sic]. The pilot immediately went to work on his job, the customs official and one soldier inspected the ship, and one soldier sealed the wireless room, radar, gunpowder, binoculars, and other navigation equipment.

The same day at 2000 anchor was weighed and the ship was moored at Cam Pha Wharf. Shortly afterward the harbor master, an interpreter, a customs official, and 3 soldiers came on board, and began a landing inspection. Crew members presented their crew member identification cards for collation with the register of crew members. There was no search of the interior of the ship or of the crew members' quarters. Each crew member was allowed to retain a 3 days' supply of tobacco -- considered to be 150 cigarettes. The rest of the sealing was completed very simply. The interpreter's English was poor, and the business between the captain and the purser was finally finished. This interpreter also performed the duties of agent.

Thenceforth one customs official and one soldier were stationed on the boat, and one soldier was stationed on the wharf.

Loading began at 0700 on 16 April and was carried out on an all-night basis.

2. The Wharf

At the wharf are 4 railroad tracks for the use of coal cars, and 4 cranes. Each coal car had a capacity of 4 t of iron and carried 2 uncovered boxes; 15 or 20 of these empty cars are pulled by an electric locomotive. The line is double-track only in the vicinity of the wharf; further away, it becomes single-track.

There were 2 kinds of uncovered boxes for coal loading. One of these was entirely of iron, fan-shaped, the upper part slightly wider than the lower. Four wires ran from a crane to the 4 lower corners of the box, and when the box was over the hatch of our ship, 2 of the wires were released on one side, dumping the contents of the box into our ship. The other kind of box made of boards on 2 sides and steel plates on 2 sides; on the steel-plated side a flap extended from the center to the upper part, wires being attached to the 4 corners of the upper part. When the box reached a point over the hatch of our ship, a deckman opened the flap with a wooden stick (to the end of which was attached a fan-shaped iron object) dumping the coal into our ship.

There were about 75 coal cars (150 uncovered boxes), but because the operation of the cranes loading our ship was rapid, a steady supply of coal was unfortunately not maintained.

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At a distance of 500 m to the front of our ship (at the foot of the mountain), and one km to the left along the coastal railway, is a coal yard, where an immense amount of coal -- lumps, half-lumps, powdered coal, etc -- is stored. There are also 4 cranes here, located at 400 m intervals.

The coal cars pass between this coal yard and the foot of the mountain. Judging from the faint traces of locomotive smoke, the empty cars go to the left along the coastal railway (in front of the coal yard) about 800 m and then turn right. It is said that there is a coal mine further on here.

Near the wharf there are 2 small buildings which seem to be a resting place for employees, and the wives and children of the employees are seen going to and coming from the direction of the foot of the mountain. There is also one shed which seems to be in a switchyard.

3. Loading

At 0700 on 16 April loading began at Hatch 2 and Hatch 3. Each hatch was supplied with a crane, and coal was continually brought to a point near the ship on 2 tracks. At each track there were 10 laborers (the 2 who hung the upper part of the coal boxes on the wires were children 12 or 13 years old), and at each hatch there was one deckman (one of these was a child 15 or 16 years old).

At the time of the beginning of loading, because the coal had been prepared for loading beforehand, 350 t were loaded per hour. Subsequently, however, 150 to 200 t were loaded per hour.

At 1200 on the same day, 30 persons of all ages (4 men and 26 women) entered Hatch 2 and Hatch 3, and began the work of trimming.

At 1530 on the same day, one crane was left at Hatch 2 and Hatch 3, while one crane was removed to Hatch 4, where it began loading.

At 1900 on the same day, the 30 laborers emerged on deck from the hatch, and began trimming at the upper part of Hatch 3.

At 1920 on the same day, loading at Hatch 3 was completed; Hatch 2 loading continuing.

At 1940 on the same day, trimming at Hatch 3 was completed, and trimming at the upper part of Hatch 2 was begun.

At 2000 on the same day, loading at Hatch 2 was completed, the crane was moved to Hatch 1, and loading was begun at Hatch 1.

At 2015 on the same day, trimming at Hatch 2 was completed.

At 0000 on 17 April, 11 male and 11 female laborers began trimming at Hatch 1 and Hatch 4.

At 0100 on the same day, loading at Hatch 1 was completed, and trimming at the upper part was suspended because of a small rain shower.

At 0210 on the same day, trimming at the upper part of Hatch 1 was begun.

At 0225 on the same day, trimming at the upper part of Hatch 1 was completed.

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At 0650 on the same day, loading at Hatch 4 was completed, and trimming at the upper part was begun.

At 0655 on the same day, 20 t remained to be loaded. These were distributed between Hatch 2 and Hatch 3.

At 0715 on the same day, loading at Hatch 2 and Hatch 3 was completed, and 11 male and female laborers began trimming.

At 0740 on the same day, trimming at Hatch 4 was completed, and the remaining coal was put into 2 drum cans.

At 0820 on the same day, trimming at Hatch 2 and Hatch 3 was completed.

The following amounts of time were necessary for loading the hatches:

	<u>Hatch 1</u>	<u>Hatch 2</u>	<u>Hatch 3</u>	<u>Hatch 4</u>
Time begun	2000, 16 April	0700, 16 April	0700, 16 April	1530, 16 April
Time completed	0100, 17 April	0715, 17 April	0715, 17 April	0650, 17 April
Total time necessary	5 hours	2 1/2 hours 15 minutes	2 1/2 hours 15 minutes	15 hours 20 minutes

After loading, our ship's draught was 8 m at its center.

4. Departure

At 0715 on 17 April the loading superintendent announced that because of tides, the ship would depart at 2200 that day.

At 1000 the same day, it was announced that the ship would depart as soon as the clearance inspection, scheduled to begin at 1500, was completed.

The deck personnel cleaned the deck, put the lids on the hatches, and covered them, and, together with engine room personnel, completed the preparations for clearance.

The same day, the harbor master, and interpreter, a customs official, 3 soldiers, and 2 pilots came to the ship to begin the clearance inspection, all personnel having gathered together. The inspection consisted only of a count of personnel. At 1450 the inspection was completed, having taken only 20 minutes. The harbor master, the interpreter, and one soldier left the ship, while the customs official and 2 soldiers remained on board.

The pilot announced that because of tides, the ship would depart in 30 minutes.

At 1515 the same day, a harbor authority boat arrived at the ship, and at 1535 the boat began the work of tugging. During the departure of our ship, this boat either preceded or followed our ship. At 1725 the soldier who was on board removed the seal from the wireless room. At 1730, upon our arrival at Cancun 1, the pilot, 2 soldiers, and the customs official left the ship.